

PROCUREMENT ENGLAND LIMITED (PEL)
Advisory Group Meeting (PELAG)

Friday 7th November at LUPC Offices, London

Attendees:	Paul Tomany [Chairman]	NWUPC
	Kevin Casey	NWUPC
	Andy Davies	LUPC
	Mike Haslin	TUCO
	Alison Holmes	NEUPC
	Richard Murphy	TEC
	Chris Philpott	LUPC
	Colin Reeve	SUPC
	Frank Rowell	NEUPC
	Susan Wright	SUPC
	Judith Hoyle [Secretary]	NWUPC

1. Introduction, apologies and Welcome

There were no apologies. Paul welcomed Mike and Richard to their first PELAG Meeting.

2. Minutes of the Meeting and Matters Arising

These were taken as agreed.

3. EMM Survey

There had been problems as some people still had web browsers based on Windows XP. These had to be addressed and they had to get the designers to “back design” it. Paul wished to record his thanks to Caroline Blackman-Edney at Cambridge for all her help with this. For the second survey we made obvious that people had to download the “Help” instructions and we also e-mailed them to people. He received 94 responses and this is the best response they had ever had. HEFCE were not keen on any wider publicity for this as it may leave us open to Freedom of Information requests. Steve Butcher was not willing to release data on institutions. On the second EMM survey we modified some of the questions and made it easier to use. The deadline for this has been extended. BIS have requested this information in time for the next Diamond Report. Paul has asked Steve Butcher if he would like him to run a similar project next year but Steve Butcher is still unsure. Kevin feels that we should use information for our own marketing strategy and Paul replied that he has retained the Intellectual Property Rights on the software.

Members discussed the MI and the problems with under or over reporting from suppliers. Frank remarked that Hunter is only as good as the information put into it. Paul used Lancaster as an example as their spend total was very different from the figure reported by Hunter. Susan is of the opinion that we need to find some way for institutions to get the information on Hunter verified. It is a big issue for Frank that quarterly spend is outstanding for a while. Some consortia are waiting until year end to collect all their spend in. It does not matter which software we use, we must ensure that suppliers are giving us the correct data. LUPC carry out a “10 by 10” audit – the ten largest spending institutions and the ten largest selling suppliers. Some discrepancies may be down to bad systems. Alison added that it also depends on how robust procurement is within institutions and Andy feels that no data set is correct. We need to check institutional data against supplier data.

It was an action point for all six consortia to sit down and review the situation and what we should do about it.

Action: ALL

Chris asked for clarification on the tool and if we were talking about delivering a measurement tool. Andy asked how much it would cost to update this.

4. PEL Communications Group

They have devised a Communication and Marketing Plan and a draft template for a buyers guide Mike asked how many end users have been consulted on this. Susan explained that this has been put out to consortia staff and buyers. It was initially developed between SUPC and LUPC Communications Managers. This should be ready to go out now for the Heads of Consortia to consult with their members. The group were in agreement that a PEL page on the Efficiency Exchange is a good idea. LUPC already have a page on this so they will combine the two. Susan feels that we need to agree how we are going to badge PEL. We wish to be viewed on the national scene as one voice without losing our own individual brands. Andy commented that PEL should not have a branding image because it does not have a day to day interaction with members. They agreed to continue to use their consortia logos but with a strapline, "Advancing Collaborative Procurement in the HE Sector". Alison feels that it should endorse more words such as "communicate", "invite", "engage", "involve" etc. The plan itself is good but make this more interactive and two-way. A suite of tools needs to be developed for the people mentioned in it. Susan's Board will want to see and approve all communications which go out.

Paul stated that our first priority is to engage with the membership then we need to decide how we are going to do this. Regarding hierarchy, the Board will only be interested in the top three target audiences – PUK, members of government and Senior Managers. Frank questioned whether the Marketing and Communications people have an understanding of the information which is available to us for this. Colin would prefer to see where we go with the information that has to be fed back to the Comms Group. Paul feels that we should put a hierarchy in and what does and does not need to be approved. Colin asked if they are releasing case studies as PEL or as individual consortia. Paul suggested that we recommend that the Comms Group re-draft this and send it back to the Advisory Group. Susan feels that anything put on the Efficiency Exchange should go on as the PEL brand. After the report has been received back from the Comms Group we can decide how we take it forward.

5. PEL Vision Implementation Plan

Frank advised that the Contracting Plan could be downloaded from Hunter. NEUPC have recently refreshed their Category Groups with new members on there. The office staff will also put in what is and what is not covered by contracts. They are also looking at "opportunity assessment". We have groups in existence who are looking at a specific commodity. Category management is an ideal process to engage with the end users. We need to understand who the stakeholders are. Alison stated that, in her opinion, the commodity group and the category group are not the same. NEUPC may have changed the people on their groups but Andy does not have the depth of capability or willingness to sit on the groups. There is a huge difference between a small commodity and a much larger category. Kevin pointed out that we need to understand as a sector how much is going through collaborative procurement. There should be one consortium looking after a contract but with input from other regions. Category management requires a completely different way of working. Susan believes that each region should be responsible for forming a national category group. In the past Working Parties were nationally driven and institutions would nominate people to be on there, usually one procurement and one technical person.

We cannot dictate to institutions who we want on the groups. Frank feels that we should be targeting 'x' amount of spend for 'x' amount of benefits. Andy enquired as to why you would need a category group in each region that does the same job as a national category group.

Mike explained that TUCO have regional meetings and agree a contracting plan then set up a tender working party for a national contract. Is there a will to have these national groups to feed out of the wider stakeholders? Kevin firmly believes that we should standardize our Terms and Conditions across all consortia. If all institutions can sign up to one set of terms, that would be ideal but impossible. Frank explained that we did look to standardize tender documentation some time ago but PQQs need to be brought in line with the new directives. Paul added that the vast majority of content in consortia documents is pretty much the same. When the new EU rules come in we can put the standardized documents in where they need to be.

Paul ran through the Action Points on the Implementation Plan. Alison feels that we need to rehearse the arguments on this. He suggested that everybody looks at the National Working Party Terms of Reference. This would be a way of evolving them into more than they are. It took everybody two years to agree to these Terms. If we can find a way to feed this back into the Implementation Plan then it will work.

Paul asked the Heads of Procurement how we take this forward. Kevin feels that these just need some minor tweaking as to what we mean by category management and then they just need pulling together. Colin added that it is about putting in place the training for the institutions at the same time. Chris believes that we need to put the BUFDG issue up the agenda and we need to make sure that we are dealing with that by engaging with BUFDG. Alison declared that we have to deliver a high level strategic document and this strategy will tell exactly what they are asking us to do. Paul will re-write the plan and make it shorter and therefore more strategic. Some things can be achieved very easily but others will take more time, therefore we should do the easy ones first. The structure does not need to change, it just needs joining together.

If there is a big initiative Paul would be happy to use his PR company to help raise the profile. There are a couple of key pieces of work which need to be done here. Developing strategy would be completion by Quarter 4, finish time should be the end of 2015.

Members held a discussion regarding the BUFDG and HEPA re-alignment.

6. Report from Joint Contracting Group

Frank reported that the group had discussed the standardization of documents again. They had also requested that consortia staff keep the Hunter database up to date which will help the information on spend and therefore benefits as well. Regarding the National Estates Category Group, they are all feeding the data into the national category structure while taking out things such as capital expenditure and have identified 15 areas to look at. After this the next area to study will be ICT. We now need to decide who will take this forward. Frank had put together a draft of how he sees these groups working. They have also set up a Sub-Group of the JCG to look at the benefits. All consortia are under pressure to get out their Benefits Statements to members. Mike has spoken to Angus Warren about year on year savings. Andy has put a zero on some of his as he does not have sufficient data which would stand up to scrutiny. Paul referred to the High Value Lab Equipment framework which was extremely difficult to measure savings against.

HEPA

Chris mentioned the fact that he has been asked to sit on the HEPA Board and so will be the link from this group to HEPA. HEPA was originally set up as a training academy and this has now merged with BUFDG PPG. This has long been HEPA's aim to get a procurement group as its' Sub-Group with a Finance Director as Chair.

Paul feels that it can only be good for procurement to have a separate voice in the community. Alison is of the opinion that the old PPG was not very pro-active. Mark Walton, Head of Procurement at the University of Liverpool sits on this as North West representative and Geoff Hope-Terry also sits on the group to represent the PEL Board. Members agreed that HEPA are not a separate body and that Chris will be an excellent channel of communication.

Paul will re-write the paper and then get the PEL Comms Group geared up ready if the Board approves it. We need to get the Board to sign this off and then get it out before the end of the year. Colin feels that there are mixed messages coming from BUFDG and HEPA and we need clarification. The other Heads would feed back to Paul on the plan.

Action: Paul Tomany / Heads

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Date and Place of Next Meeting

Secretary to circulate a Doodle poll to confirm date of next meeting early in the new year.